

Abstract

Tracking a personal flotation device transceiver is facilitated by a method and apparatus in which a personal flotation device transceiver sends a message identifying and locating the personal flotation device transceiver to a boat base station via a wireless broadband radio connection in the event of a 'man overboard' incident involving the personal flotation device transceiver. The boat base station sends a message via data relay satellite to a network control center system which then automatically sends emergency messages concerning the identity and location of the overboard personal flotation device transceiver, and the identity and location of the boat on which the boat base station is installed, to interested third parties using a broadband internet connection and also via standard telephone lines. In addition, the network control center system calculates probable future position location information for the overboard personal flotation device transceiver; and, sends this position location information to interested third parties to assist in the expedited retrieval of the personal flotation device transceiver. The system allows two modes of operation, the first being the 'underway' mode, which is specifically used as a primary notification method for monitoring possible overboard personal flotation device transceivers while the boat on which the boat base station is installed is underway. The second mode is the 'in port'

mode, which is used as a secondary notification method for monitoring personal flotation device transceivers attached to personal flotation devices worn by individuals who may be on dinghies, boat tenders or jet skis, in situations where they might require assistance from the boat where the boat base station is installed.